get out of the country. Lincoln answered by "telling a story" of a Methodist preacher out West, a strict temperance man, who on a hot day was offered a glass of water with a dash of brandy in it, and who replied that he would not object to a drop of something strong in his drink if that drop could be put in "unbeknownst" to himself.

Lincoln's keen mind, no doubt, saw clearly that the capture of Jefferson Davis would burden the government of the United States with a most embarrassing dilemma. The public voice would insist upon the chief of the rebellion being tried and punished for treason. Indeed, he could not possibly be held in captivity forever without being tried. Now his crime of treason had been committed in the South. A trial for treason by a regular tribunal in the South would be a mere farce, for it seemed a foregone conclusion that no jury in the South could be found that would pronounce Jefferson Davis or any leader of the rebellion guilty of treason, unless that jury were wholly composed of negroes; and even then the outcome would be doubtful. A trial by a military commission might indeed result in a verdict of guilty; but resort to a military tribunal for the trial of a political offense after the close of the war—in fact, the greatest State trial of the century, might have looked like a stretch of arbitrary power fitting an old-world despotism rather than this new-world republic.

But the assassination of Lincoln, the charge and the wide-

spread belief that Jefferson Davis and some other leaders of the rebellion had been accomplices of the murderer, and the existence of a vague apprehension floating in the air, that the Republic was still in some danger or other, made the resort to a military commission for the trial of the captured rebel-chiefs more plausible. The idea that those rebel-chiefs, and especially the chiefest of them, the " arch-traitor," as Jefferson Davis